



MEMORANDUM

To: Planning & Zoning Commission
Town of Darien, CT

From: Glenn Chalder, AICP

Date: July 11, 2017

Subject: **Sign Regulations – Issues and Strategies**
Darien Zoning Regulations

This Memorandum is intended to provide a framework for discussion in order to identify policy options which the Planning and Zoning Commission may wish to consider.

Overview

The Darien Planning and Zoning Commission requested an analysis of the sign regulations (Section 920 of the Zoning Regulations) in order to identify issues or concerns and to suggest possible approaches.

Research and investigation included discussions with Town Staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Architectural Review Board, members of the Chamber of Commerce, and local property owners and attorneys familiar with the permitting process.

Attached Sign



Detached Sign



Temporary Sign



Possible Issues

Some of the issues identified as a result of this process included:

Process

- Lengthy review / approval process
- Most signs go to ARB and process can be delayed if the application comes in after the deadline for a meeting or the application is continued to a subsequent meeting
- Lack of clarity as to the process for people interested in signage
- Lack of coordination between some boards

Standards

- Regulations seem configured primarily for pedestrian-oriented places without recognizing factors that may be different in automobile-oriented locations
- Standards are not always clear (number of signs, type of sign) and may be confusing
- Signs for residential and non-business zones or uses not clear
- Some sign setback requirements can prevent signs on certain properties
- Lighting did not allow for LED or other technologies

Content Issues

- Phrase “identification signs” implies content-based
- *Reed v. Gilbert* establishes parameters for regulating signs on the basis of content

Possible Enforcement Issues

- Conformity and removal provisions (Section 928.16) may not be enforceable
- Requirement for removal of sign for a discontinued business may not be enforceable

Possible Approaches

1. Reorganize / Rewrite Sign Regulations

SECTION 930. SIGN REGULATIONS

- 931. Purpose
- 932. Categorization of Zoning Districts
- 933. Sign Measurement
- 934. Scope And Applicability
- 935. Sign Gallery

Identification Sign



Public Facility Sign



Special Permit Use Sign



Primary Wall Sign



Hanging Sign



Blade Sign



Awning Sign



Window Sign



Post Sign



Monument Sign



Detached Directory Sign



Fuel Price Sign



- 936. Additional Provisions
- 937. Temporary Detached Signs
- 938. Sign Approval Procedures

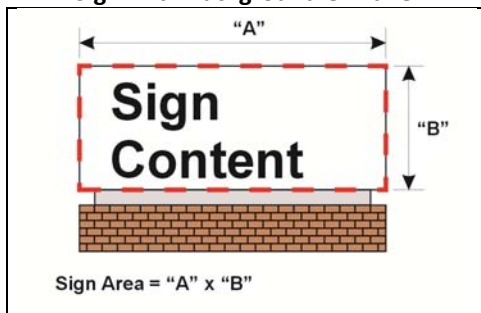
2. Categorize Sign Types By District Type

Category	Current Districts	Possible Future Districts
Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts	CBD, NHR	CBD, NH
Automobile-Oriented Business Districts	DC, DB-1, DB-2, SB, SB-E, NB	DB, SB
Office Districts	OB, DOR-1, DOR-5	OB
Single-Family Residential Districts	R-2, R-1, R-1/2, R-1/3, R-1/5, R-NBD	R-1, R-2, R-NBD
Multi-Family Residential Districts (1)	DMR, 3.7AH, DCR	DMR, 3.7AH
Other Districts	PR, MU	PR, MU

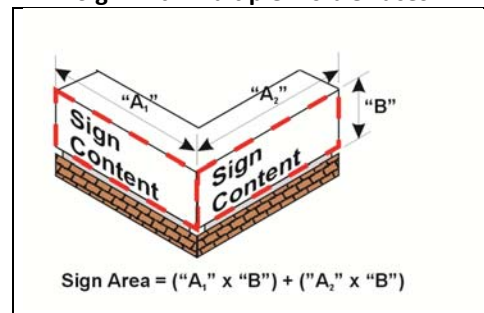
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3. Regulate By Sign Area (Not Letter Height)

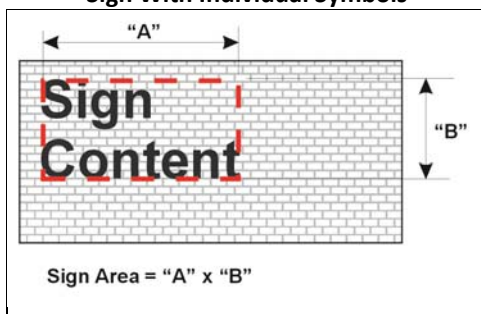
Sign With Background Or Panel



Sign With Multiple Visible Faces



Sign With Individual Symbols



**Regulate
Signs By Area
And Not By
Letter Height**

4. Clarify Exempt / Allowed / Prohibited Signs

Exempt Signs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government Signs 2. Traffic Control Signs 3. Public Safety Signs 4. Transit Signs 5. Interior Signs 6. Signage which cannot be seen from a public roadway
Allowed Signs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Street Number Signs 8. Historic Plaque 9. Real Estate Sign(s) 10. Real Estate Directional Sign(s) 11. Political Signs 12. No Trespassing Signs 13. Tag Sale Signs 14. Business Information 15. Temporary Window Signs 16. Vehicle Signs 17. Bulletin Board Signs 18. Construction Sign 19. Special School Events 20. Seasonal Decorations 21. Traffic Control Signs 22. Restaurant Menu Sign
Prohibited Signs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Type Not Specified 24. Moving Sign Or Element 25. Flashing Sign Or Element 26. Exposed Illumination 27. Off-Premises Signs 28. Sky Signs 29. Temporary Signs 30. Banners 31. Flags 32. Vehicle Signs 33. Hindrance To Traffic Safety 34. Murals 35. Hindrance To Pedestrians 36. Roof Sign

5. Use A “Sign Gallery” To Regulate

Primary Business Wall Sign (Attached)

Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts	Automobile-Oriented Business Districts	Office Districts	Single-Family Residential Districts	Multi-Family Residential Districts	Other Districts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Primary Wall Sign (Individual Letters)



Monument Sign (Detached)

Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts	Automobile-Oriented Business Districts	Office Districts	Single-Family Residential Districts	Multi-Family Residential Districts	Other Districts
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Monument Sign



Monument Sign



Primary Wall Sign (Sign Panel)



Blade Sign (Attached)

Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts	Automobile-Oriented Business Districts	Office Districts	Single-Family Residential Districts	Multi-Family Residential Districts	Other Districts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					

Blade Sign



Blade Sign



Key Elements

- Attached to a building wall.
- May consist of a sign panel.

Number Permitted

- One per demised tenant district or an automobile-
- One per building in an off

Permitted Location(s)

Maximum Sign Area

Alternatives

Design Parameters

Approval Type

Key Elements

- Permitted in lieu of a wall sign or detached sign
- Typically attached to a ceiling or to a wall with a bracket
- Generally oriented perpendicular to building façade.

Number Permitted

- One per demised ground floor tenant space

Permitted Location(s)

- Maximum height of 12 feet above adjacent ground.
- Minimum clearance of 7 feet to pedestrian space.
- Maximum projection of forty (40) inches from the wall

Maximum Sign Area

- Seven square feet.

Alternatives

-

Design Parameters

- The blade sign may overhang a public sidewalk/street right of way by a maximum of three feet provided the applicant submits written permission from the owner of the affected property (the Town of Darien Board of Selectmen or State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, depending on the owner of the sidewalk/street right of way).
- No blade sign shall be internally illuminated.

Approval Type

- See Section XXX

**Regulate
Signs By Type
And Location**

less otherwise authorized by PC by

ARB (and PZC if Special Permit)

Office district

ARB and PZC in any other district

um height shall not exceed four

district or an office district, ARB

pedestrian-oriented district by

ARB plus Zoning Permit

6. Organize Other Information

1. General Design Guidelines
2. Sign Theme
3. Sign Content
4. Setbacks And Orientation
5. External Illumination
6. Internal Illumination
7. Possible Sign Area Increase (PZC or ZBA or “as of right”?)



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- a. **Deeper Setback** (potential lack of visibility resulting from the greater setback)
 - Wall sign only
 - In an automobile-oriented business district
 - Set back from the public street more than 100 feet
 - Allow up to a 50% increase in sign area
 - b. **Shallower Setback** (potential lack of visibility due to the oblique angle of a sign oriented parallel to the street and the speed of traffic)
 - Wall or hanging sign only
 - In an automobile-oriented business district
 - Closer than 50 feet to the public street
 - Allow up to a 25% increase in sign area
8. Non-Conforming Signs
 9. Maintenance
 10. Severability

7. Address Temporary Detached Signs

1. Special Events
2. Banners
3. New Business
4. Business Promotion
5. Application Pending

8. Seek To Streamline Process

<p>Zoning Permit (without further review)</p>	<p>The sign design conforms to these Regulations and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is consistent with a <u>sign theme</u> approved by the ARB. 2. Is <u>replacing an existing sign</u> and the sign will be practically identical in terms of size, shape, color, lighting, location, and other relevant factors. 3. Is <u>practically identical to other signs on the building</u> (or on the property) in terms of size, shape, materials, color, lighting, location, and other relevant factors. 4. The sign is new or is replacing an existing sign, is located at a logical place given the overall building design or site layout, and the sign colors will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • black letters and/or symbols on a white background, • white letters and/or symbols on a black background, or • a similar layout using black or white and an accent color on the building. 5. The sign is replacing an existing non-conforming sign and the replacement sign conforms to these Regulations.
<p>ARB Plus Zoning Permit</p>	<p>The sign design (or sign theme) conforms to these Regulations and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Referred to ARB for review 2. Favorable review = Zoning Permit 3. Unfavorable review = PZC for final decision
<p>PZC Plus ARB Plus Zoning Permit</p>	<p>The sign design (or sign theme) does not conform to these Regulations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply to PZC for Special Permit 2. Referred to the ARB for comment 3. Have Special Permit criteria specific for signs

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Concept



Planimetrics

70 County Road, Simsbury, CT 06070 860-913-4080